



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

May 4, 2003

OFFICE OF  
ENFORCEMENT AND  
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Environmental Justice News for the Week Ending April 27, 2003

**FROM:** Nicholas Targ, Counsel  
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This summarizes environmental justice related news for April 21, 2003, through the week ending April 27, 2003. Except as noted, this review is confined to Lexis/Nexis queries conducted under the following search: "(environment! w/2 (justice or racism or equity or disproportionate or disparate)) or (environment! w/50 minorit! or low\*\*\*income) or (executive order 12898) or (civil right! w/50 environmental)". Please note that we have not included multiple articles covering the same topic or articles pertaining to international or foreign-based environmental justice issues, unless they have a direct connection to the United States.

For the week ending April 27, 2003, the following news is current:

**A. News-**

1. Amy Wold, "Alsen Residents Get Chance to Raise a Stink With EPA Representative," State-Times/Morning Advocate Baton Rouge, Louisiana (April 26, 2003).

North Baton Rouge community members raised concerns about drinking water quality and air quality to EPA representative Warren Arthur in a meeting last week at the Alsen Community Center. Florence Robinson, a member of the North Baton Rouge Environmental Association said, "the visit from the EPA is important because it puts the agency in touch with the people who live in the community." The article continues quoting Robinson as saying, "Friday's visit also offered people a chance to learn how to address issues with state and federal agencies to help solve problems."

2. James Hannah, "Ohio residents say Army's plan to dispose of hazardous waste is environmental injustice," The Associated Press, (April 25, 2003).

The article reports, "A suburban Dayton neighborhood which is one third black and one third poor is concerned with a plan... the Army [has] to ship waste to a private contractor on the outskirts of Dayton," from its chemical depot in Newport Indiana, an all-white, mostly middle-class community. The chemical waste, hydrolysate, is produced during the neutralization of VX nerve agent. The article reports, attorneys for the potentially affected community sent a "complaint," based on Executive Order 12898, to both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Army, alleging environmental discrimination. According to the article, Army spokeswoman Marilyn Daughdrill said that she would not comment on the complaint, but responded, "we wouldn't even be looking at this option if we didn't think it was a safe way of dealing with the waste."

3. John Chadwick, "Catholics focusing on ecology; Interfaith conference planned," The Record, Bergen County, New Jersey (April 25, 2003).

The New Jersey Catholic Coalition for Environmental Justice held a three-day interfaith conference, bringing together theologians, ecologists, and state officials, at Princeton University on April 25 - 27. The conference, "A Vision for Environmental Justice: Our Responsibility for God's Creation," focused on issues ranging from global warming to starting parish environmental groups to appreciating St. Francis of Assisi as a model for activists.

4. "Shell faces international protest at Annual General Meeting," M2 Presswire (April 23, 2003).

Activists from around the world will "speak out about environmental injustices practiced by Shell," according to a wire report. The environmental group, Friends of the Earth, and a coalition of community groups will present a report that includes "testimon[y] from communities living next door to Shell in the US, the Philippines, South Africa, Nigeria, Argentina and China[, and which] catalogues the environmental damage, the health problems and the impacts of accidents these communities face," according to the article.

5. Tavis Smiley, "Senator John Kerry, Beverly Wright and Peggy Shepard discuss Earth Day," National Public Radio Los Angeles, California (April 22, 2003). ***[NT NOTES: A number of articles detailed Sen. Kerry's proposed "environmental empowerment zones."]***

The transcript of the Earth Day edition of the "Travis Smiley Show" includes a discussion with Senator John Kerry (D-MA) on his involvement with the environmental movement and his commitment to environmental justice. Senator Kerry said, "today I'm going to be announcing that I'm go[ing to] create environmental empowerment zones in this country so that we once and for all really address the incredible problem of minority and poor communities in America becoming the dumping grounds for toxic waste sites, for sludge, landfills." The transcript also includes conversation with two leaders in the environmental justice movement, Dr. Beverly Wright, co-founder of the Center for Environmental Justice at Xavier University, and Peggy Sheppard, Director of West Harlem Environmental Action (WEACT). Ms. Sheppard is quoted as saying, "We need to focus, on certain communities that do have increased health disparities and disproportionate exposure to environmental toxics."

## **B. Policy and Legislation–**

1. H. J. Res. 33, A resolution “Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States Respecting the Right to a Clean, Safe, and Sustainable Environment.” Introduced by Representative Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (D-IL), on March 4, 2003.

The Resolution would provide as follows:

"Section 1. All citizens of the United States shall have a right to a clean, safe, and sustainable environment, which right shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State.

"Section 2. The Congress shall have power to implement this article by appropriate legislation."

2. National Conference of Black Mayors, Resolution on Supplemental Environmental Projects (April 25, 2003).

The National Conference of Black Mayors ratified a resolution in support of the use of Supplemental Environmental Projects. Among other provisions, the resolution “encourages the Environmental Protection Agency to issue final guidance on Community Based Supplemental Environmental Projects and conduct an aggressive outreach program in low income and communities of color...”